



# Show-Me

The "Official" Newsletter of Literacy in Missouri

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Literacy...

## 2006 GED Testing Program Statistical Report

The following was reprinted from the 2006 GED® Testing Program Statistical Report provided by the American Council on Education and the General Educational Development Testing Service of the American Council on Education. You can read the complete report at

<http://www.acenet.edu/AM/Template.cfm?Section=GEDTS&TEMPLATE=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=24596>

### Executive Summary

The 2006 GED Testing Program Statistical Report is the 49th annual report in the program's 65-year history of providing a second opportunity to adults without a high school diploma to earn their jurisdiction's<sup>1</sup> GED credential, and, as a result, advance their education, personal, and professional aspirations. The report provides candidate demographic and GED tests performance statistics as well as historical information on the GED testing program. The GED Testing Service (GEDTS)<sup>™</sup>, with the cooperation of jurisdictions who administer the GED tests, is the sole source of worldwide data on the GED testing program and the adults the program serves.

The GEDTS mission is as follows: As a nonprofit program of the American Council on Education, GEDTS stands as the only legitimate and time-honored architect of the Test of General Education Development (GED® Tests) that certify the high school-level academic achievement of national and international non-high school graduates. In collaboration with key partners, we develop, deliver, and safeguard our tests; we analyze the testing program and its participants; and we develop policies, procedures, and programs to ensure equal access to our tests.

In 2006, more than 714,000 adults worldwide took some portion of the GED test battery of five tests measuring writing, reading, social studies, science, and mathematics. Of that total, more than 614,000 completed the battery of test. More than 419,000 of the completers –nearly 68 percent–met the passing standard by earning scores equal to or above those earned by 40 percent of graduating high school seniors.

Although this report is presented in such a way to facilitate comparisons across jurisdictions of pass rates, candidate demographics, and trends across time, a word of caution is warranted for making such comparisons. Ultimately, each jurisdiction manages its own GED testing program, is dependent upon the funding it receives, and establishes many testing program policies. Hence, it is important to recognize that jurisdictional policies, including those of testing fees and prescreening and retesting requirements, vary and undoubtedly affect testing program outcomes such as pass rates. For example, jurisdictions that prescreen candidates by requiring them to pass the Official GED Practice Tests generally have higher GED

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The mission of the "Show-Me Literacy Newsletter is to provide professional information-sharing, resources and news about adult education and literacy.

Tests battery pass rates. Some jurisdictions may require a candidate to complete the entire battery before retesting on an individual test for which he or she did not earn the minimum standard score; if the retesting occurs in the next calendar year, that candidate would be counted as failing in the current year's statistical report. This report draws attention to several known cases in which the outcomes are the evidence of disparate policies.

Highlights of the 2006 GED® Testing program Statistical Report include the following:

## SECTION I: WHO LACKS A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA AND WHO TOOK THE GED TESTS?

- The 2000 U.S. Census indicates that more than 39 million adults in the United States aged 16 and older, or 18 percent of the U.S. adult population,<sup>2</sup> lack a high school diploma.
- Across the entire GED testing program in 2006, 1.5 percent of adults without a high school diploma took one or more parts of the GED test battery, 1.3 percent of adults without a high school diploma completed the battery, and 0.9 percent passed the battery. In other words, of all the adults who lack a high school diploma, only one out of every 100 attempted and passed the GED Tests.
- Of those who completed the GED test battery in 2006, 68 percent passed. GED Tests completion and pass rates are affected by two major issues: candidates' levels of preparation to take the GED Tests, and jurisdictional and testing center policies. The latter often influences the former.
- The average age of all candidates was 25 years. Since the release of the 2002 Series GED Tests, the average age has remained relatively stable at approximately 25 years for U.S. candidates and 31 years for Canadian candidates.
- In 2006, candidates 16 to 18 years old accounted for 30 percent of all candidates. Although the GED testing program reaches adults over 90 years of age, candidates aged 50 years and older made up the smallest group of candidates, at 3 percent.
- The race-ethnicity distributions of candidates have remained relatively stable over the life of the 2002 Series GED Tests. Of all candidates who indicated race/ethnicity when they tested in 2006, 53 percent were white, 23 percent were African American, and 19 percent were of Hispanic origin.
- In 2006, 70 percent of all candidates reported that they completed half or more of their high school education. Overall, 30 percent of the candidates indicated that they had been out of school for one year or less. Yet 25 percent of the candidates waited more than 10 years before taking the GED Tests. The overall average number of years out of school before testing was approximately eight years.
- Educational reasons were the most prevalent reasons for taking the GED Tests. Nearly 60 percent of candidates indicated that they tested for educational reasons. More than half of all candidates, 52 percent, indicated they tested for personal reasons, such as being a positive role model and personal satisfaction. Forty-eight percent identified employment reasons, primarily to get a better job, for testing. Seven percent of candidates indicated that they tested to enter the military or support their military career.

- For all candidates who tested in 2006, the percentage of candidates achieving their jurisdiction's minimum standard score on each content area test (410 in the United States and 450 in Canada) were highest for the following three tests: Science (93 percent); Language Arts, Reading (91 percent); and Social Studies (90 percent). Fewer candidates scored high enough to meet the minimum standard score on the Mathematics (81 percent) and Language Arts, Writing Tests (88 percent).

## SECTION II: WHO PASSED THE GED TESTS?

- In 2006, 68 percent of candidates (more than 419,000 adults) passed the GED Tests by earning an average score of 450 or greater on the five individual content area tests (equivalent to a standard score total of 2,250 or greater), and earning a minimum score of 410 on each individual content area test score if they tested in the United States or 450 if they tested in Canada.
- Jurisdictions that had higher pass rates generally required candidates to have completed an adult education program of study and/or pass the Official GED Practice Tests before taking the GED Tests. Of the 10 jurisdictions with the highest pass rates, five required their candidates to pass the Official GED Practice Tests and at least three others required their candidates to show evidence of preparedness to take the tests, offered the Official GED Practice Tests free of charge, and/or offered one-on-one test preparation.
- The average age of passers across all jurisdictions was 24 years, and has remained between 24 and 25 years within the operation of the 2002 Series GED Tests.
- The race/ethnicity distribution of all passers in 2006 was 62 percent white, 17 percent African American, 16 percent Hispanic, 2 percent American Indian or Alaska Native, 2 percent Asian, and 1 percent Pacific Islander/Hawaiian. All of these percentages were similar to 2005 and have remained stable relative to the number of candidates in each race/ethnicity who tested.
- In 2006, 73 percent of the GED passers completed 10th grade or higher. The average number of years out of school for GED passers was nearly seven years.
- As with the entire population of GED candidates, an educational reason for testing was the most frequently endorsed reason for testing by GED passers in 2006.
- The GED test battery average standard score across the five content area tests was 528; a score of 528 or higher corresponds to a score achievable by the estimated top 33 percent of U.S. graduating high school seniors. Mathematics and Language Arts, Writing were the two most difficult tests as indicated by the average standard scores.

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<sup>1</sup>Throughout this report, the term *jurisdiction* is used to refer to an entity such as a U.S. state, U.S. insular area, Canadian province or territory, U.S. military facility, correctional institution, and VA hospital that administered a GED testing program.

<sup>2</sup>For the purposes of this report, an adult is someone aged 16 or older in the United States and the insular areas. This definition is consistent with the definition in the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Title II of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, and the U.S. Code (Title 20: Education, Chapter 73: Adult Education and Literacy, Subchapter I: Adult Education and Family Literacy, Paragraph 9202: Definitions). In a context of adult basic and secondary education, these three sources define adults as individuals "who have attained 16 years of age and who are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law." For Canada, adults are people 15 years and older, based on 2001 Canadian Census data.

# Supporting Students from Poverty

By: Kevin Daniel

*Reprinted from MSTA's Class Notes Summer 2007. Kevin Daniel is associate superintendent for instructional services in Raymore-Peculiar R-2.*

Helping our students who come from backgrounds of poverty learn at high levels is challenging. Let me tell you about a few strategies I've learned in my journey as a professional educator. This topic is near to my heart because I was a student who grew up in poverty. Thanks to some great teachers, I was able to overcome the odds.

Building and sustaining meaningful relationships is one of the early keys I found in reaching students who come from poverty. As a child, I worked harder for teachers who cared about me and took an interest in me. My students peers and I could always tell when someone was faking that they cared. You cannot fool students on this one.

Students know who really cares by the actions we take. Those actions should include frequent positive interactions, modeling respect, genuine praise for doing things well, greeting students with a smile each day, contacting parents for positive things, creating multiple opportunities for success each week and showing that we're enthusiastic about learning and school. In addition, I think the biggest action we can take is having high expectations for all our students.

You may be saying to yourself, "I already know this stuff; don't you have anything else to give me?" Yes and no. I came to realize that I knew what to do; I just didn't consistently do it. When you are conscientious about reaching out to students, you soon realize you were not doing things as consistently and frequently as you thought you were. There's no magic bullet out there or just one thing that is going to work with students from poverty backgrounds who are struggling in school. That is why you must employ multiple strategies simultaneously to be successful.

I have been doing a lot of reading on the topic and recommend Ruby Payne's book *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*. The book makes it clear that teachers need to focus more on building students' vocabularies and having a literacy-rich classroom. This focus will help all your students as they read and write more than ever.

I encourage you to start class each day with a bell-work activity that focuses on vocabulary words that tend to trip up students on standardized tests. Education consultant Larry Bell calls these words power verbs. Many students who come from poverty are at a disadvantage when it comes to literacy and the number of words they are exposed to, know and understand.

As a result, these students struggle in school. One of the most important things we can do is develop teams to support them. The teams should offer social and emotional supports, in addition to academic supports and interventions. The support should come early in the school year and long before grade cards come out. We need to eliminate the old "wait to fail" attitude that is still pervasive in some schools.

All the random acts of good things by good teachers do not replace a systematic approach by a team who works together to help a struggling student.

Yes, indeed, helping a student learn at high levels can be challenging and frustrating given the odds that are stacked against that student. However, when a teacher consistently turns his or her good intentions into specific action steps, avoids working in isolation and collaborates with others to support the student, the results are high achievement and many success stories. You have been hearing from one of those success stories today.

# MAEL-PDC Training Schedule

<http://maelpdc.org/>

## April 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Spanish Language Outreach—NCMC	2	3 Spanish Language Outreach—Sedalia	4 Spanish Language Outreach—Columbia	5 PCW Workshop—Columbia Math Institute—Moberly
6 PCW Workshop—Columbia	7	8 Spanish Language Outreach—Joplin Employability Skills—Online	9 Spanish Language Outreach—Springfield	10	11 Spanish Language Outreach—Lebanon	12
13	14 Spanish Language Outreach—St. Louis	15	16	17 Health Literacy—Online	18	19 CASAS - North Kansas City
20	21	22	23	24	25	26 Writing for Life—Online

# Calendar of Events

COABE Conference

St. Louis, Missouri

Show Me Success: Empowerment Through Diversity

Hosted in conjunction with MAACCE

April 28—May 1, 2008

For more conference information go to:

<http://www.coabeconference.org/>

## Upcoming Certification Workshops

### PCW Workshop- Columbia

April 5-6, 2008

May 3-4, 2008

### BTAP Schedule-Columbia

June 7-8, 2008

## Quote:

**“There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.”**

**-Albert Einstein**

## 2008 Spring AEL Directors' Conference

May 12-13, 2008

Tan-Tar-A Hotel and Resort

Osage Beach, MO

## New Feature Article for Show Me Newsletter

Our first submission to *Forever Moments for Teachers* is featured below. Do you have an “aha” moment to share with other teachers? Show Me Literacy would like to feature your memorable moment in our “Forever Moments for Teachers” corner of the newsletter. AEL teachers see successes almost daily in the classroom. You can email your submission and a digital picture to [neads@rolla.k12.mo.us](mailto:neads@rolla.k12.mo.us). What are you waiting for...come on, send it in!

## Forever Moments for Teachers

*By: Laura Willhite, GED Instructor, Rolla Program*

A forty-two year old man handed a book back to me. The book accompanies Read Along Durkin Hayes Audio series. His smile told me a lot, but his words were... "This is the first book I have ever read all the way through!" Very much a **IT WAS AN AHA MOMENT AND IT IS ALL WORTH IT MOMENT.**

Several weeks after this wonderful event, we were contacted and informed of this same gentle man's unexpected death. Upon attending the viewing and meeting his parents, we were again affirmed that it was truly worth it all. Both parents commented of the peace and his sense of worth which had become greater due to his work in the GED classes. His dreams were to graduate...as he did to heaven.

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